

Complaints and Whistleblowing Procedure

To be reviewed annually by Members of the Board

Review date: January 2026

Purpose

Innovation Training and Recruitment is committed to providing the best products and services, although we recognise that sometimes we may not meet expectations.

This document details how a learner registered on an Innovation Training and Recruitment qualification, an apprentice registered with Innovation Training and Recruitment for their End-point assessment or their employer or an approved Innovation Training and Recruitment provider can make a complaint about the service or products offered by Innovation Training and Recruitment or its representatives.

This document replaces all previous enquiries, complaints and appeals policies and procedures as from the operative date.

Scope

This document is applicable for the following services:

Ofqual-regulated qualifications and units

Qualification Wales

Access to HE Diplomas

End-point assessments

Quality endorsed courses

Regulatory Authorities

The relevant regulatory authorities are Ofqual, Qualification Wales and Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). As an approved End Point Assessment Organisation, Open Awards also commits to meet the requirements of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Every attempt has been made to ensure that the provisions of this document are consistent with the requirements of the regulatory authorities. Where the requirements of a regulatory authority change, or where inadvertently these procedures conflict with those of the regulatory authority, the latter shall apply. Where the requirements of the regulatory authority are amended and require changes to this document, such changes will be made as soon as practicable and Open Awards will inform providers accordingly. Details of how to complain to any of the regulatory authorities can be found on their direct websites.

Complaints Policy

This document is for use by the following:

- All staff at Innovation Training and Recruitment
- Learners registered on qualifications with Innovation Training and Recruitment and units at an approved provider.
- Apprentices registered with Innovation Training and Recruitment for End-point assessment.
- Employers of apprentices registered with Innovation Training and Recruitment for End-point assessment and their employers.

Responsibility of providers

- Providers/schools/settings must have complaints arrangements which learners/apprentices can access if they wish to complain about the service received.
- All learners must be informed of these arrangements as part of their induction and relevant documents available to all learners throughout their course. Copies of policies will be made available on our website, and all learners, staff and providers will be signposted to this on
- All provider staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of Open Awards qualifications and units must familiarise themselves with the provider's complaints policy and procedure.
- Providers must ensure that complaints are handled consistently and in accordance with this document and the provider's own complaints policy.
- Complaints in relation to decisions taken by the provider must go through the provider complaints process before the matter can be referred to Open Awards, with the exception of End-point Assessment.

Complaints Policy

All complaints will be processed in writing to their line manager, tutor/assessor or point of contact within the organisation. If those involved wish complaints to be raised higher than this they can do so by emailing Company Director and Quality Assurance Lead, Kaya Doyle. Complaint must include:

- Date of incident/issue
- Person who wishes to raise the complaint
- Information surrounding the complaint
- Ways in which they feel this could be resolved/move forward (if there is no way forward, please include this)
- Name of person they are submitting this to
- Signature

Complaint must be submitted to us *within 20 working days* of the event occurring.

Innovation Training and Recruitment will acknowledge receipt *within 5 working days* and will advise the complainant whether the complaint is in or out of scope.

Complaints will normally be investigated by an internal manager not directly responsible for the product or service against which the complaint is being made.

Innovation Training and Recruitment will normally provide a full response *within 10 working days* of receipt of the complaint. If the issues raised are more complex or involve staff who are unavailable, it may take longer to investigate; if this is the case we will let you know when we expect to respond.

Appeals against a decision made by Open Awards are covered by the Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Process. Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an enquiry or an appeal, we will confirm the basis on which the issue is being addressed.

If an individual is unhappy about the way an assessment has been conducted and suspects that malpractice may have occurred, the concern should be sent to appeal and to the governing board for discussion.

Confidentiality and Whistleblowing

Innovation Training and Recruitment acknowledges that occasionally a complainant may wish to remain anonymous. Whilst we are prepared to investigate issues which are reported to us anonymously, we will always try to confirm an allegation by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those to whom the complaint/ allegation relates.

In the event of anonymous complaints, the outcome of any investigation will be confidential and Innovation Training and Recruitment will not be able to provide any information on what action we have taken. Therefore, it is always preferable for the complainant to reveal their identity and contact details to us, and if concerned about possible adverse consequences, request us not to divulge their identity.

Please note, we are not obliged to disclose information if to do so would be a breach of confidentiality and/ or any other legal duty. At all times we will investigate such complaints from whistle-blowers in accordance with relevant whistle blowing legislation.

Complaints Policy

Further avenues of complaint

Should the complainant remain dissatisfied following final outcome, they can refer the complaint to the appropriate regulator.

Internal reviews following a complaint being upheld

Should any part of a complaint lead to discover a failure in its processes, all reasonable steps will be taken to:

- Identify other learners/ apprentices who have been affected by the failure.
- Correct or where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of the failure.
- Ensure that the failure does not recur in the future.

Where the outcome of a complaint raises concerns over the validity of results at a provider, Open Awards will take action to protect the interests of other learners/ apprentices and the integrity of the award of qualifications and/ or units. This may include, for example:

- Further review of learners' work by Innovation. Up to 100% sample may be requested for verification purposes.
- Review of the unit(s) of assessment through its unit review process.
- Review of the rules of combination for a qualification (if appropriate).

A representative of the Senior Management Team will take responsibility for initiating the most appropriate course of action, and this decision will be taken in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer.

Complaints Policy

The following forms of behaviour or correspondence are considered vexatious:

- A complainant being abusive or threatening, either during a telephone conversation, face to face meeting or in written correspondence.
- A complainant repeatedly contacting Open Awards via telephone or email in a given working day without offering new evidence or information.
- Making unreasonable demands on staff/learners outside of the agreed remit of the investigation.

In such circumstances, the complainant will be referred to the Innovation Training and Recruitment Director.

Zero Tolerance

Innovation Training and Recruitment endeavours to provide a service which is prompt, courteous, clear and responsive to customer needs. In order to provide the best service; Innovation Training and Recruitment is committed to the well-being of its staff and customers.

We expect those using our services and premises to treat other customers and our staff with the courtesy they expect to receive themselves.

Verbal abuse, harassment, disruptive behaviour and violence are unacceptable. In the event of any of these occurring, Innovation Training and Recruitment will not hesitate to take action which could lead to the withholding of services, or prosecution.

Monitoring and Review

An annual report on all complaints, including those not upheld, will be made available to the Innovation Training and Recruitment governing board, and discussed and recommendations made to improve quality and well-being of all.

We will review the policy annually as part of its self-evaluation review and revise it as and when necessary, in response to customer and learner/apprentice feedback, changes in its practices, advice from the regulatory authorities or external agencies, changes in legislation, or trends identified from previous instances of malpractice or maladministration.

Regulatory Requirements

This document is designed to fulfil the requirements of our regulators. In particular:

Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition

Conflicts of interest

Identification and management of risks

Management of incidents

Malpractice and maladministration

Notification to Ofqual of certain events

Arrangements with third parties

Arrangements with Centres

Maintaining confidentiality of assessment materials

Moderation where an assessment is marked by a Centre

Compliance with Ofqual's appeals and complaints process

QAA AVA Licensing Criteria

Complaints and appeals

Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education

End-point Assessment Reasonable Adjustments Guidance

Education and Skills Funding Agency

Conditions for being on the register of end-point assessment organisations

Internal complaints can be raised confidentially with the Quality Manager/Director

kaya@innovationgroup.uk